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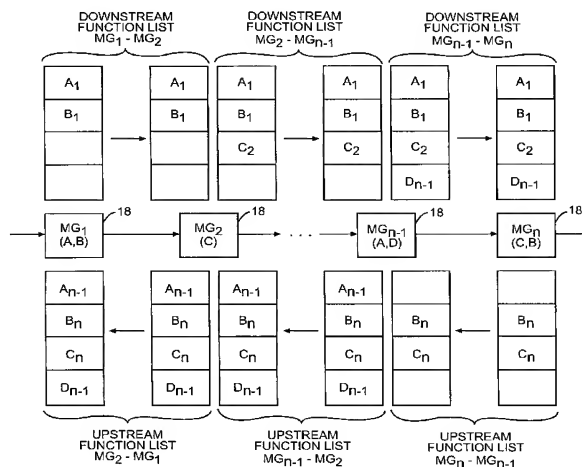
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(54) Title: COMMUNICATING PROCESSING CAPABILITIES ALONG A COMMUNICATIONS PATH



(57) **Abstract:** The present invention provides a technique for determining which nodes are to provide various functions on traffic along a particular communication path. Generally, a communication path may include multiple nodes between which and through which traffic is routed. These nodes may include the communication terminals at either end of the communication path, as well as various types of routing nodes along the communication path. Each node will send to other nodes in the communication path information identifying the local functions it is capable of providing to the traffic carried in the communication path, and if available, remote functions capable of being provided to the traffic by other nodes in the communication path. Each node will receive from other nodes in the communication path information bearing on the remote functions. Each node will access criteria to determine whether any local functions should be applied to the traffic.